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UNCLAS ADANA 0280

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SE PRESS REACTION TO NORTHERN IRAQ

CLASH NOVEMBER 13, 2003.

1. OZGUR GUNDEM: The officials from KADEK, which dissolved itself two days ago, said that there had been a small-scale clash between their militants and a group of Border Patrol Police at Haftanin region in Kurdistan. It is reported that two HPG, People's Protection Forces, members ran into border patrol police, and one guerilla was held by the peshmergas as a result of the tension that arose. Meanwhile another HPG member informed the nearest guerilla unit of the incident. Clashes burst out between the peshmergas and the guerilla unit dispatched to the scene. Thanks to efforts by both sides, the clashes were halted and the guerilla who had been held was released. There were some slight wounds, but no casualties have been reported. The KADEK officials verified the presence of US troops among the peshmerga group, and added that the US soldiers made efforts to end the clashes and overcome the crisis. KADEK officials underlined that the PDK forces and the US forces in the region were not operational forces, and that they did not have any problems PKK/KADEK.

2. RADIKAL: The US rebutted the news that appeared in the Turkish press claiming that "The US and Kurdish peshmergas exchanged prisoners with PKK. The US announced that it still held the PDR (Democratic Liberation Party) guerillas. The Turkish side has been insisting that they exchanged prisoners during the clashes on Saturday. The Turkish officials said the Turkish General Staff was examining the incident, and the picture would become clearer with the conclusion of the investigation.
REID